05

01 | Submerged Rock

"Raincoat" is a little restless.

He parks the car near an abandoned dock and gets out to open the trunk. An unconscious, frail man, tied up in the fetal position, lies inside. He's none other than Tony, an up-and-coming director who's currently the talk of the town in Linkon City. He's worth billions and has mysteriously disappeared while writing his next movie script.

He had set a limit for himself when he became a "white glove" for the Ever Group: Never target public figures. This had kept him hidden for many years.

But now...

He chuckles. He really should renegotiate his contract with Ever for dumping such a huge job on him.

01 Submerged Rock

Putting on his gloves, Raincoat takes out a phone from Tony's body. He unlocks it with the man's finger and opens several recording apps, finally finding what he wants in Voice Memo.

Every audio file has been renamed, probably for ease of access. Each can easily raise this rookie director's rank on Ever Group's execution list.

It never ends well for people who know too much.

Raincoat's finger hovers over the delete button. All he has to do is erase these recordings, throw the phone into the sea, and dispose of this man. Then his job will be over.

But...

An idea springs into his mind. He plays the

01 | Submerged Rock

first audio file.

02 | Audio File No.1: Mo Art Studio

05:13

"...That'd be great if you don't mind. Recording is a habit of mine I picked up at work. It's hard to keep up with the conversation if you only take notes. Did Thomas tell you? The Deepspace Academy introduced me before. Our team is preparing a fantasy-themed film. We want to use Lemuria as the setting. They said you're an expert in Lemuria, and you just returned from a trip."

"Deepspace Academy thinks too highly of me. I'm just a painter. I don't know anything about Lemuria."

"There's no need to be so humble, Mr. Rafayel. I've seen your paintings. The oceans in your work feel alive. It's very unique."

02 | Audio File No.1: Mo Art Studio

"Those are just normal pieces. Forget about them. Anyway, speaking of the Deepspace Academy, I heard they recently organized an archaeological team to find the ruins of Lemuria. Why don'tcha ask them? They should know more than me. They might not tell you much, though. I heard things didn't go too well for them. Anywaaay, I have stuff to do, so I can't see you off. Bye, Tony."

03 | Audio File No.2: Disappearance

10:41

"The archaeological team? Ah, you've got the wrong person, Director Tony. I'm just a handyman. I stayed on the ship and organized the relics during the exploration. I never dived! I really don't know the specifics, and I can only tell you what I saw. The day our ship arrived, on uh, the 20th, I think. Ms. Eleanor was the team leader. Her, Fred, Yennifer, and Professor Sean all went down in a submersible."

"We set up underwater archaeological bases before, the kind we can stay in for several days. Communication with the surface had always been fine. The plan was to finish and come back on the 4th. But you wouldn't have guessed what happened! The submersible

03 | Audio File No.2: Disappearance

didn't come back until the 11th! A whole week, you see! I wanted to know what happened, but the Deepspace Academy kept everything all hush-hush. Everyone thought that was the end of it. But the day after, I heard... Come closer, Tony. We gotta keep our voices down... I heard Ms. Eleanor and Fred left the Deepspace Academy after an argument!"

"They were both senior members, so them leaving caused quite a stir. And on the third day, Yennifer disappeared too. Spooky, huh? It gets worse! That afternoon when I was clearing up her camera, I found a deleted video clip. Privately altering archaeological records is against the rules, so I immediately tried to contact her. But I just couldn't reach her. I tried contacting the others and only

03 | Audio File No.2: Disappearance

Professor Sean answered! He sounded weird, not energetic at all. And as soon as I mentioned archaeology, he hung up."

"Oh, would you look at the time? I gotta go. I have lots of reports to catch up on because of that video. I'm super busy! Goodbye, Director Tony. I hope your movie is a box office hit!"

New Audio Clip: Memo 1

"I was just looking for source material for the film. I didn't expect to uncover mysterious events involving the archaeological team. I pulled some favors and looked into it. Turns out Eleanor, Fred, and Yennifer didn't just disappear. They vanished off the face of the Earth. It could be because I don't have any investigative skills, but none of them have

03 | Audio File No.2: Disappearance

been home. They haven't responded to messages or answered any calls. No one's seen them leave their house. It's all too suspicious... Creating a Lemurian mystery movie might be better. Tsk, missing archaeologists, deleted underwater footage, secrets of the ocean floor... That's quite a synopsis. If I can find out more, I'll have a direction for my script. I need to contact Professor Sean as soon as possible. If he's gone, I'll lose all my leads."

04 | Audio File No.3: Blue Fish

31:37

<Sound of a door opening>

"T-Tony?"

"Professor Sean, it's an honor to meet you.

Uh... Are you going on a trip? You're all packed up. I hope I'm not bothering you or anything."

"No, I'm not... You don't need to address me as professor either. I'm no longer with the Deepspace Academy. Come in."

"Thank you. I'll get straight to the point then, Mr. Sean. I'm here about the matter of Lemuria. My team is—"

"That's...! I-I have nothing to say. Everything is recorded in the exploration report. You can ask for it from the Deepspace Academy..."

"I read it already, but I rather have a first-

04 | Audio File No.3: Blue Fish

hand account from someone who was actually there. It's better for the script. That's why I want to hear your experience when you explored the ruins of Lemuria, Mr. Sean."

"Is this a test to see if I'm lying or not...?"

"Hahaha, I'm a director, not a detective. I can't tell. This is all for the movie script. Even the greatest fairy tales need to be based on reality."

"Reality...? Oh... My sense of reality has changed because of my time in Lemuria..."

"How so?"

"Some things... I didn't write in the report because no one would believe them... But if you're making a movie, then... Pretend everything I say is a story..."

"Please, go on."

04 | Audio File No.3: Blue Fish

"On the 20th, the day the submersible went underwater... We found a whirlpool. Our navigation and communication equipment malfunctioned, and we lost our way as well as our courage..."

"We... struggled for a long time. We were about to give up when, out of nowhere, a school of blue fish appeared... It was a miracle! They must've been messengers from Lemuria that heard our desperation and came to our rescue... They guided us to the ruins."

"Hmm, a school of blue fish led you to the ruins?"

"It sounds unbelievable, doesn't it? Even though it happened, recalling it feels like a dream... But in that vast, unnavigable ocean was everything beyond our current scientific

04 | Audio File No.3: Blue Fish

understanding...!"

"Excuse me for asking this, but have you taken any medication recently, Mr. Sean?"

"You...! It's fine if you don't believe me, but please don't doubt what I've seen!"

"No, no, I'm not. It's just... not everyone gets to witness miracles. It's better safe than sorry. Please continue. I'd love to hear more about the blue fish."

"The life there is sentient... Those blue fish accompanied us throughout our trip. They were our guides, beacons, companions, and emotional support... Even now when I close my eyes, I can still see them."

"Is it possible that these fish are some sort of Lemurian machines? Like specifically designed for leading the way or for some other

04 | Audio File No.3: Blue Fish

purpose?"

"No! Absolutely not! They were real fish with their own thoughts and feelings. Not machines..."

"Fish have feelings? Why would you think that, Mr. Sean?"

"I'm just speculating... There's no particular reason."

"Okay, let's move on. Could you describe in detail what happened after you entered the ruins?"

"...

"I... I don't really remember what happened after that... All I can say is... We... saw someone in Lemuria..."

"As in another member of the archaeological team?"

04 | Audio File No.3: Blue Fish

"No! But he... He was dressed just like us..."

"You mean a fifth person appeared underwater?"

"I... I'm not sure. I don't know... Anyway, I can't say anymore. You should go..."

"...Mr. Sean, I'm sorry for barging in today. Before I go, though, I have one last question. According to the ship's report, they never lost communication with you. If your communicators were malfunctioning from the start... then who were they getting signals from?"

<Sound of a door closing>

New Audio Clip: Memo 2

"The school of blue fish... makes for a nice visual reference. Professor Sean's account

04 | Audio File No.3: Blue Fish

does seem genuine. I don't think he was lying. But... who is this fifth person he mentioned? And what does he mean by 'dressed like us'? This is strange... Three of them are missing, and the remaining one is packing his bags and leaving. Something must have happened. At least the video is close to being restored. Hopefully, I can get more from that."

05 | Audio File No.4: Shadow Underneath

07:51

"Hey, Tony! It's been two years since the last time we talked. You're a pretty good friend, only remembering me when you need something. On top of that, it's such a difficult task. Do you think IT guys don't have lives?"
"Anyway, whoever deleted this video is really skilled. Do you know how long it took me to restore it? I put off three big projects, worked day and night fiddling with this camera, and only managed to restore one frame. What's with that face? One frame is my limit! The memory card was tampered with. I'm self-taught, so I have no idea how to handle such high-end tech. This is the best I can do. Here's the phone too. I restored the call history for you. Whoever had this phone before talks

really loud. It hurt my ears!"

"Okay, okay. I'll shut up. But you better treat me to lunch sometime! I should be compensated one way or another for my work!"

New Audio Clip: Memo 3

"I've seen the restored footage. The fifth person who was dressed like them... It was a skeleton! I really wish it was clearer... Wait, is the skeleton holding a... weapon? It looks like a Protocore weapon! What's going on? Protocore weapons were only invented in the last decade or so... How could this one have appeared in the ruins of Lemurian? Is it possible the underwater city didn't sink naturally...? This is fantastic news! No wonder

05 | Audio File No.4: Shadow Underneath

the video was deleted... Right, there's Fred's phone."

06 | Audio File No.5: Conflict

Fredrick to Eleanor

09:18

"Hello? Why aren't you answering your phone, Eleanor? I don't care what you're up to. I'm definitely leaving! Nothing ever goes well when it comes to Lemuria!"

"Of course, I have no shame. Those Protocore weapons had nothing to do with us, but this matter implicates the Ever Group. Do you think we can handle them?! And you felt it too! People have been stalking us ever since we left Lemuria! Sean and Yennifer are naive to think it's Lemuria's god. But you don't seriously believe such nonsense, do you? I'm telling you, someone's spying on us. The video has been deleted. We left the Deepspace Academy, and we've been hiding every day

06 | Audio File No.5: Conflict

since... We've gone to such great lengths to avoid being captured, so why can't you change your mind?"

"Eleanor, you're endangering our lives if you keep looking into Lemuria! Sure, you can say you did everything and none of us were involved, but would the people from Ever believe you? Don't be an idiot! If you still have a brain, then leave the Deepspace Academy like the rest of us. Forget about everything related to Lemuria!"

New Audio Clip: Memo 4

"Fred thinks Ever were the ones stalking them in the ocean? That's impossible. Why would Ever need to tail them? It's the deep sea. It's pointless... And Fred clearly said he was going

06 | Audio File No.5: Conflict

to leave, but now he's missing. Did he disappear on his own? Or did Ever... Ha, law and order is just a fool's dream..."

"Tony, what a coincidence. Didn't expect to see you here. Do you want to talk about Lemuria?"

"Who are you? Aaah!"

***

The clip ends with a cacophony of noise. Then a notification pops up on the screen: End of Recording.

He had dug up the Protocore weapon buried deep within the ruins. No wonder he got on Ever's execution list. Raincoat loosens his tie. Just as he's about to toss the phone back into the trunk, a flame materializes on his palm. The phone's shattered screen crackles in the

06 | Audio File No.5: Conflict

firelight.

"Niiice. I got both the person and evidence in one go."

The voice is as silky as brocade. He turns around to see someone in a suit and leather shoes approaching him from the far end of the dock.

"No wonder you're still alive and working with Ever despite uncovering so many secrets."

The scent of the ocean brushes past him.

Raincoat freezes, his mind racing. Behind him is the sea. While he's been looking at where the man is standing... Could he have come from the sea?

"Are you Rafayel?"

Putting two and two together, he makes an educated guess.

06 | Audio File No.5: Conflict

"You know this Tony guy is really unlucky to get on a hit list for a film. And you're right about how it's dangerous to know too much."

Rafayel sits down next to the trunk, sighing at the sight of the director being bound and gagged. He turns and glances at Raincoat's hands. "The same goes for you. The more dirty work you do, the less you can hold on to these gloves, yeah?"

Raincoat understands. He knows a lot more about Ever than Tony. Who knows? He might be next.

This mysterious artist who recently returned to the country has countless connections with Lemuria. His sudden appearance here isn't just to sigh and say hello.

"Thank you for the reminder, Mr. Rafayel. Do

06 | Audio File No.5: Conflict

you have any advice?"

"Weeell, since you're just in this for the money, why don'tcha work for me and give yourself a way out?"

"What do you want?"

Rafayel looks out at the ocean, his gaze seemingly penetrating the depths of the water. "Ever has an execution list. Those on it either die or disappear. I want..."

A copy? For it to be destroyed? Add a few more names to it? Raincoat waits for Rafayel to make his request. But then, he mentions a single name.

"...A girl?"

"If her name's on the list, then give everything about her to me."

He's just a pawn. The complete list only exists

06 | Audio File No.5: Conflict

in the hands of "that person" Watching Rafayel's confident demeanor, it's evident he knows the trading partner isn't Raincoat himself. After weighing his options for a moment, Raincoat feels like this is a good deal.

After careful consideration, he handed an address to Rafayel, "Mr. Rafayel, someone will be waiting for you here tomorrow night. Whether you can obtain the list depends on your negotiation skills."

"The Nest?" Rafayel glanced at the address briefly before conjuring a flame in his palm and devouring it. "The lights there are blinding. Doesn't the person behind you feel the same?"

Raincoat didn't respond and changed the

06 | Audio File No.5: Conflict

topic, "Is the girl on the list your enemy?"

"I'm just an artist. I don't have enemies. She's my lover, you know."

It's almost hard to believe his honesty, but Raincoat has no intention of delving into the artist's confusing life.

"You're more than just an artist, Mr. Rafayel. By the way, did you know you're also on the list? You're ranked sixth."

Rafayel doesn't say anything about it. He just frowns, discontent. "Seriously? Why do I have such a low rank? I thought I'd be first."

At Rafayel's nonchalant attitude, a curious inkling begins to form in Raincoat's mind. He thinks of the mysterious deaths—the rumored Sea Monster Murders that once shook other cities.

06 | Audio File No.5: Conflict

Then, he thinks of the many outsiders the Ever Group called "research samples" that he and other "Raincoats" had dealt with.
After thinking for a few seconds, Raincoat calmly asks, "Mr. Rafayel, I presume you have your own list. What's my ranking?"
Rafayel waves his hand. "You won't make it onto my list for a while. Maybe one day, though."
"..."
"By the way, let the director go when he wakes up. It's better if you have less blood on your hands."
Raincoat shrugs. "Then, here's to a successful partnership. Should we shake hands?"
"I need my hand for painting, so no." Rafayel shakes his head, stands up, and walks away.

06 | Audio File No.5: Conflict

After a few seconds, he stops as if he remembers something. He stares at the raincoat on Raincoat. "This doesn't suit you." He waves and completely disappears from Raincoat's sight.

"..."

Raincoat is silent for a long time, then he removes his wrists to put the hood on, "I bought it yesterday."